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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW ENGLAND

LESSING'S CRITICAL OPINION OF THE CAPTIVI OF PLAUTUS

(Agnew)

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## THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW ENGLAND

The Classical Association of New England will hold its fortieth annual meeting at the St. George's School, Middletown, Rhode Island, on Friday and Saturday March 29th and 30th.

The following program of papers will be presented at the meeting: 'Fables from India,' by Professor LeRoy C. Barret, Trinity College, Hartford; 'A Point of Order,' by Professor W. L. Carr, Colby College; 'The Place of the Classics in Future American Education,' by Dr. Alston H. Chase, Phillips Academy, Andover; 'Pars Galliae Quarta,' Dr. Robert H. Chastney, Montpelier High School, Vermont; 'Professional Preparatory Latin—An Experiment,' by Dr. Grace A. Crawford, Hamden High School, Connecticut; 'Our Earliest Extant Gedichtbuch,' by Dr. Christopher M. Dawson, Yale University; 'Hacc Meta Viarum,' by Professor Van L. Johnson, Tufts College; 'The Classics in Portugal and Brazil,' by Dr. Paul L. MacKendrick, Harvard University; 'On Teaching Greek,' by Dr. Henry Phillips, Jr., Phillips Exeter Academy; 'Some Negative Prefixes in English,' by Professor Lester M. Prindle, University of Vermont; 'The Nationality of Horace's Parents,' by Dr. Alexander H. Rice, St. George's School; 'John Adams and the Classics,' by Professor Dorothy M. Robathan, Wellesley College; 'The Classics in the College Curriculum,' by Dr. William R. Tongue, Holy Cross College.

At dinner on Friday evening the attending members of the Association will be guests of the St. George's School. The evening session will be devoted to a program commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Association. Addresses for the occasion will be delivered by Dean-Emeritus George H. Chase, of Harvard University, Professor-Emeritus Karl P. Harrington, of Wesleyan University, and Dean Paul Nixon, of Bowdoin College.

Anyone interested in the Classics is cordially invited

to attend the meeting. Further information may be obtained from the chairman of the local committee of arrangements, Dr. Alexander H. Rice, the St. George's School, Middletown, Rhode Island, or from the secretary of the Association, Professor John W. Spaeth, Jr., Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut.

## LESSING'S CRITICAL OPINION OF THE CAPTIVI OF PLAUTUS<sup>1</sup>

The Captivi of Plautus is not so well known today as it was some years ago when it was more commonly read in the colleges and universities. Its hey-day, probably, was in the era when a geometry text-book, intended for mixed classes, could refer without apology to the 'limbs' of a triangle. The Menachmi and the Mostellaria are more generally studied now; the Captivi is rapidly becoming one of the unfamiliar Plautine comedies, and I may be forgiven therefore for presenting here a short summary of this play.

A kindly, rather naive old man, Hegio, buys two prisoners of war, the Captivi of the title, Philocrates and Tyndarus, his slave. Hegio intends to exchange Philocrates for his own son, Philopolemus, who is held captive by the enemy. To effect this purpose, he means to send the slave, Tyndarus, but he is duped and unwittingly sends the master, Philocrates, a deception which Tyndarus loyally promotes. Now the trickery is revealed, and Hegio's purpose is apparently defeated, for, of course, no one now expects Philocrates, once free, to return himself or to send back Philopolemus and also a run-away slave, Stalagmus, who identifies Tyndarus as Hegio's other son whom he kidnapped many years ago. A parasite, Ergasilus, is a sort of comic fifth wheel to the play. You will notice that there are no female characters in the comedy, no mention of love.

<sup>1</sup>A paper read at the meeting of the New England Classical Association at Medford, Mass., April 4, 1941.

Such in very brief and bald outline, is the comedy of which the German critic, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, wrote: 'It is the finest play that has ever been on the stage.'<sup>2</sup>

Most of us, when we read this opinion, were surely taken aback, to put our thought no more strongly. The play does, of course, have certain good qualities. Few of the New Comedy cliché scenes and characters are here, and these few are treated in an unusual way. The 'running slave' scene is here, but is foisted off on the parasite. The old man is duped, but since he is rather like Mr. Pickwick, he cannot be made the fool, which is the fate of so many old men in Plautus. The two young friends in this instance are master and slave, but their loyalty and devotion are as great and real as any depicted in the comedies between free men. Mischievous slaves abound in Plautine comedy, but the Captivi has a thoroughly bad, an incurably bad slave, Stalagmus, and there is no pretense about it; he admits it! Plautus, or his Greek original, did well in his deviations from the usual course of the New Comedy, and we must applaud the daring. But, nevertheless, we cannot call the Captivi 'the finest play that has ever been on the stage.'

Yet, the critical and editorial tradition until recently has been to follow Lessing, though, to be sure, with occasional misgivings. To cite only one instance, W. Y. Sellar wrote: 'The Captivi was pronounced by the greatest critic <i.e., Lessing> of the last century to be the best constructed drama in existence.' But even the English scholar was not prepared to accept this judgment literally, and said further: 'Though probably few will now be found to assign to it so high a place, yet, if not the best, it certainly is among the best plays of Plautus.'<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the saving and modifying remarks, the damage has been done. Particularly unhappy has been the repetition of Lessing's remark without inquiry into the reasons for the opinion.<sup>4</sup> In the quotation from Sellar just read we found one reason given, why the Captivi was 'the best constructed drama in existence.' Technical excellence, then, Sellar meant, was the feature of the comedy which led to Lessing's judgment. But Sellar cannot have read Lessing, for the German critic, as we shall see, did not consider 'dramatic construction' as the reason for his opinion.

Lessing was, however, a great critic, and we must pay deference to his dicta. As recently as 1938 an American scholar, F. O. Nolte, wrote: 'Lessing is the greatest

critic since Aristotle. Great as the gap between them <Lessing> and the "master of those who know" may be, still there is no other European critic who deserves to take this place in the interval.'<sup>5</sup>

And in 1937 an English writer, H. B. Garland, said: 'Lessing possessed in a very high degree most of the qualities essential to a great critic.'<sup>6</sup> Both writers, then, after delivering their superlatives, proceed to define and delimit: there are 'grave deficiencies' to be sure (Nolte); 'he is, of course, not without defects and limitations' (Garland). But, despite modifications, Lessing's exalted position in the critical world is untouched, and we face the dilemma, in the case of the Captivi, of mistrusting our own opinions (which, of course, we are loath to do) or of questioning Lessing's great reputation (which we may not feel competent to do).

The fact is that we and Lessing judge the play from quite different premises. This is made evident, for example, in Gilbert Norwood's discussion of the Captivi. After dissecting the play, and finding it wanting technically, he writes: 'Was such a gulf of ineptitude ever plumbed before or since? Nevertheless, this play is incessantly extolled: Sellar places it "among the very best plays of Plautus." The only conceivable explanation of such breath-taking judgments is that the morality is unusually high; there is no love intrigue, and the self-sacrifice of Tyndarus is noble. But that has nothing to do with dramatic excellence... Small wonder that Plautus is reputed a good playwright when leaders of criticism have adopted standards like this.'<sup>7</sup>

The morality of the play is high! Lessing's extravagant statement is thus explained, and correctly; but we need to look a little more closely at Lessing's life and writings to reach a more complete understanding.

This opinion appeared in print in 1750, in the quarterly journal Contributions to the History and Advancement of the Theater,<sup>8</sup> in Lessing's twentieth and twenty-first years. He had been born, son of a Lutheran pastor, in 1729. His education in the elementary schools had been strictly Classical. At Leipzig, where Lessing entered the Theological Faculty in 1746 as a student, two strong influences came to bear on him:

<sup>5</sup>Fred O. Nolte, Grillparzer, Lessing, and Goethe, in the Perspective of European Literature, 146 (Lancaster, Penna., 1938).

<sup>6</sup>Henry B. Garland, Lessing, the Founder of Modern German Literature, 94 (Cambridge, 1937).

<sup>7</sup>Plautus and Terence, 89 (in the Series Our Debt to Greece and Rome, New York, 1932).

<sup>8</sup>Beiträge zur Historie und Aufnahme des Theaters'; cf. n. 13 below. Lessing's writings are cited from the collected works edited by Karl Lachmann and Franz Muncker, 23 vols. (Stuttgart, Leipzig, and Berlin, 1886-1924) referred to hereafter merely as Lachmann. For biographical data on Lessing, see W. Oehlke, Lessing und seine Zeit<sup>2</sup>, 2 vols. (Munich, 1919); E. Schmidt, Lessing: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Schriften<sup>4</sup>, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1923); and the work of Garland cited in n. 6 above.

<sup>2</sup>'das schönste Stück das jemals auf die Bühne gekommen ist.'

<sup>3</sup>William Y. Sellar, The Roman Poets of the Republic, 188 (Oxford, 1889).

<sup>4</sup>Cf., for example, E. P. Morris, The Captives and Trinummus of Plautus, XXXV (Boston, 1898); J. Wight Duff, A Literary History of Rome from its Origins to the Close of the Golden Age, 178 (New York, 1932).

the one, that of his professors, Ernesti and Johann August Christ, who, and especially the latter, illuminate for him the thought and writings of Greece and Rome; the other influence was that of the theater. For Lessing broke away gradually from the narrow limits of his books and began to take an interest in the world, particularly the theater, as we shall soon hear in his own words. His informal association with the theatrical troupe of Frau Friderike Neuber educated him in the practical problems of the stage, made him aware of public taste, and led to the production, early in 1748, of his play, *Der junge Gelehrte*, a comedy written in the Plautine manner.

In June, 1748, he left Leipzig without a degree; and after enrollment at Wittenberg and almost immediate withdrawal, he turned in November to Berlin, and to a life of free-lancing, much against his family's wishes.

There was, indeed considerable bitterness at this period between Lessing and his parents. They wanted him settled in life, to be self-supporting, and, perhaps most important of all, to aid financially in rearing the younger children. The country minister and his wife were shocked, to put it mildly, that their son should become an adherent and devotee of the theater, for, of course, the theater and immorality were synonymous in their minds.<sup>9</sup>

Their attitude towards the theater can be illuminated from the *Oratio de Comoediis* by Samuel Werenfels, a Swiss divine (1657-1740). This speech, published in 1716, was, as we shall see, in Lessing's hands at the time when he was ripening his opinion of the *Captivi*. Werenfels' thesis was that acting in comedies was good training in morality and eloquence for students, but he readily admitted the baseness of professional actors. He says,—and I quote from an English translation of 1744—: 'And now, methinks, I hear some of you saying to me; What do you aim at, Young Man? Would you have the Disciples of Eloquence become Comedians, Pantomimes, Stage-Players? Stage-Players! Heaven forbid! What! those wretched Mimics, who act merely for their Pay, and assume any Character for the sake of Lucre? Who strolling (sic) from Town to Town prostitute their Art? Who are branded by the Roman law as Infamous? Who represent Nothing but dishonest Loves, shameless Harlots, base Procurers? Who, by lewd and obscene Speeches and wanton Gestures, endeavour to make the Audience laugh? Who ridicule Virtue, and applaud Vice? To whom Theft, Fornication, Adultery, Deceit, Perjury and Slaughter, are matter of Sport and Pastime? By whom Modesty, Candour, Chastity, Truth, Probity

<sup>9</sup>The episode of 1740, when Pastor Lessing fulminated from his pulpit against the rector of the local school, J. G. Heinitz, for his article on the stage as a 'School of Eloquence' is told in Oehlke, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 24-25.

and Religion are accounted Folly? Who transport us from the Christian into the Pagan School?'<sup>10</sup>

That the elder Lessing had in mind his son's association with actors is clear from a letter written to the father on April 10, 1749. 'You demand that I come home,' wrote the son. 'You are afraid that I might go to Vienna with a view to becoming a writer of comedies myself... My correspondence with comedians is quite otherwise than you imagine. I have written to Vienna, to Baron Seiller, who is the director of all the theaters in Austria, and whose acquaintance is no shame to me and can be of use in time... Do not reprove me with the assertion that only comedians know me... I could show you letters, for example, from Copenhagen, which are not from comedians, as proof that my correspondence does not have only the stage as its basis.'<sup>11</sup>

Lessing's parents had some grounds for their fears. At Leipzig Lessing had been in association, as we have seen, with Frau Neuber and her company, and a later tradition had it that Lessing had fallen in love with one of the actresses. By January, 1749, he had written or projected nine plays, mostly comedies; and the next two years saw him at work on thirteen more.

Time and again Lessing wrote home from Berlin reassuring his father and mother on his way of life and his personal conduct. We have already seen part of one such letter. Another, written to his mother a few months earlier, on January 20, 1749, just as he was turning twenty, is especially revealing. 'I came from school at an early age,' he wrote, 'in the positive conviction that my whole happiness lay in books. I came to Leipzig, to a place where one can see the whole world in miniature. The first months I lived as secluded as <at school>. Always at my books, busied with myself alone, I thought of other men as little, probably, as I thought of God... I learned to understand that books would teach me, but would never make a man of me... I learned to dance, to fence, to tumble... I laid aside serious books for a while, to look around in those that are more agreeable and probably just as useful. Comedies came to my hand first. No matter to whom this may seem incredible, they did me very great service. From them I learned to distinguish between a pleasant and forced manner and a rude and natural conduct. From them I learned to recognize

<sup>10</sup>The Usefulness of Dramatic Interludes in the Education of Youth: an oration spoken before the Masters and Scholars of the University of Basil, by Mr. Werenfels. Translated from the Latin by Mr. Duncombe... London. Printed for R. Dodsley at Tully's Head in Pall-Mall, 1744. p. 18. The original Latin version may be found in vol. 2, pp. 443-454 of *Samuelis Werenfels... Opuscula Theologica, Philosophica et Philologica*, ed. 3 Lugdunii Batavorum et Leovardiae... MDCCLXXII, 2 vols.

<sup>11</sup>Lachmann, vol. 17, pp. 11-12; cf. also the letter of April 28, 1749, in the same volume, p. 16.



true and false virtues, and to avoid sins as much because of their ridiculousness as because of their disgrace.<sup>12</sup>

About a year later began to appear the quarterly journal, *Contributions to the History and Advancement of the Theater*. Only four numbers were ever published, for Lessing and his colleague soon disagreed on policy.<sup>13</sup>

In the first issue appeared Lessing's biography of Plautus; in the second, his translation of the *Captivi*; in the third, a letter, ostensibly anonymous, but really, I believe, from his own hand,<sup>14</sup> criticizing the translation, and attempting to refute, on technical grounds, the assertion made in each of the previous issues that the *Captivi* was the finest play that had ever appeared on the stage. Lessing withheld his real explanation of his statement until the fourth issue, where it appears in his rebuttal of his own man of straw; but the wary reader might have found in the third issue a hint of the explanation that was to follow, namely, in a review of a German translation of the Latin oration already mentioned and quoted, Samuel Werenfels' *Oratio de Comoediis*. We gather from the review, Lessing's own, that other and better translations of this work had already appeared in German; and it is noteworthy that an English version was published in 1744, the one which I have used. The oration was in the European air, we may conclude, and the experts and interested public found in the oration opinions and counsel of which they approved. If we leave Lessing for a moment, and quote Werenfels, we will see wherein lay the general interest, and also wherein Lessing, in particular, found support for his theory, if not the theory itself.

Immediately following the passage which I have already quoted from Werenfels, on the wickedness of professional actors, he goes on: 'Let the whole Oeconomy of the Drama tend to promote Elegance of Manners, the Love of Virtue, the Abhorrence of Vice. Let Virtue appear in a Form so fair and amiable, as to attract the Love and Admiration of all the Spectators; let Happiness and Glory attend her as Pages; sometimes paint Vice with such hideous Features, that Nothing may seem more detestable; and sometimes with such distorted Looks, that she may appear ridiculous to all wise men. Let Contempt, Scorn, Infamy, Fear, Pain, Death, and all Evils constantly pursue her.'<sup>15</sup>

And a little later he says, 'O liberal Pleasure, which alone may be stiled (sic) pure; which alone deserves to be called the Pleasure of the Mind! This does not, like other Pleasures, soften the Body, enervate the Strength, emasculate the Mind; but raises, confirms, and animates it to Noble Deeds. This kindles in our Breast a constant Desire of imitating that amiable Virtue in Life, whose beauteous Form we so much admire on the Stage. The Honest, the Useful, and the Pleasant are not here divided, as in other Pursuits: But what is Pleasant is also Useful, and the Pleasure itself a Benefit.'<sup>16</sup>

Of Plautus, Werenfels says: 'What of Plautus? Do you think him less elegant in his *Captives*, in which Comedy (as he himself says) *Nullae sunt subagitationes, nulla amatio*, there are no Obscenities, no Love Intrigue, than in his other Plays? On the contrary, not only I, but Persons of the finest Taste and Judgment are of Opinion, that This is the most Elegant of all his Comedies.'<sup>17</sup>

We see how several influences had come to bear on Lessing. His Classical training had given him a love for Plautus.<sup>18</sup> His brief experience with the stage had apparently convinced him that the German public would welcome the Plautine comedy.<sup>19</sup> His relations with his parents had driven him to a self-defence which, to judge from Werenfels' European popularity, was almost universally accepted, that is, the inherent and positive morality of comedy.

We are consequently not surprised to find in the fourth and last number of the *Contributions* that Lessing used the current standard of morality in defending his statement that the *Captivi* was the finest play ever produced on the stage. Many had said that the *Captivi* was the best of Plautus' plays. Listen to Lessing as he proves the comedy to be the best of all plays: 'I call the finest play—not that which is most probable and faithful to the rules, not that which has the cleverest thoughts, the most agreeable conceits, the most delightful jokes, the most artful development, and the most natural dénouement; but, the finest play, in my opinion, is that which, in addition to having in

<sup>16</sup>Werenfels, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>17</sup>Werenfels, op. cit., p. 21. The line from Plautus is *Captivi* 1030, slightly misquoted.

<sup>18</sup>Theophrastus, Plautus, and Terence were my world, and I studied them in all comfort in the narrow inclosure of the cloister-like school.' Lachmann, vol. 5, p. 268. Lessing's interest in Plautus persisted. On April 11, 1749, in writing to his father, urging him not to interfere with his way of life, he quoted *Trinummus*, 392-398. Lachmann, vol. 17, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>Der junge Gelehrte, in the Plautine manner, was his first play to be produced, by Frau Neuber, early in 1748. In 1749 he wrote a comedy, *Weiber sind Weiber*, modeled on the *Stichus*; in 1750, Justin, following the *Pseudolus*. In connection with his translation of the *Captivi*, he promised his readers an imitation of that comedy; this he never wrote, apparently, though he did imitate the *Trinummus* in *Der Schatz* (1750).

<sup>12</sup>Lachmann, vol. 17, pp. 7-8.

<sup>13</sup>Lessing's contributions were a preface to the proposed journal, a biography of Plautus, a translation of the *Captivi*, a lengthy critique of that comedy, as well as a few book reviews. They are to be found in Lachmann, vol. 4, pp. 49-193.

<sup>14</sup>Lachmann, vol. 4, pp. 132-171. For Lessing's authorship of the letter I find support in Schmidt, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 168; but cf. Garland, op. cit., p. 54, for a belief that the letter was genuinely not from Lessing's pen.

<sup>15</sup>Werenfels in the Duncombe translation (cf. n. 10), p. 19.

large measure the beauties I have mentioned, comes closest to achieving its purpose. But, what is the purpose of a comedy? To shape and improve the morals of the audience.<sup>20</sup> The means which comedy employs to this end is to represent vice as hateful, and virtue as attractive. But because many persons are too depraved to be affected by this means, comedy has still a stronger means, to let vice be ever unhappy, and to let virtue, in the end, be happy; for fear and hope always have more effect on depraved persons than shame and love of glory. It is true that most comic poets have commonly employed only the former means <i.e., to represent vice as hateful, virtue as attractive> but this is precisely the reason their plays give pleasure rather than benefit. Plautus understood this; and in the *Captivi* he strove to present a play *ubi boni meliores fiant*, for his other plays had no other recommendation to the spectators than a *res ridicula est*. He, as a master, accordingly succeeded and to such a degree that no one has surpassed him.<sup>21</sup>

It is noteworthy that in his own writing of comedy Lessing had not always held to this high standard. Two years before, in 1748, he had written *Die alte Jungfer*, in which knavery was triumphant, and was applauded, too. A few years later in the *Theatralische Bibliothek*, he could admit of tragedy that its purpose was not to instruct but to move: 'these tears of pity and of sympathetic humanity alone are the aim of tragedy or it can have none at all.' But, still later, in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, he defined genius as combining 'the aim of teaching what we should do and not do; the aim of making us acquainted with the true signs of good and evil, of propriety and absurdity; the aim of showing the former as beautiful and happy even in misfortune and of showing the latter as ugly and unhappy even in good fortune.'<sup>22</sup>

We recognize in this definition of genius, as in the criticism of the *Captivi*, too great a stress laid on morality, that is, on conscious morality.<sup>23</sup> We cannot imagine, try as we may, Plautus going deliberately about the business of writing a comedy whose purpose is to improve the current moral standard. If Lessing quotes Plautus on his own comedy, *ubi boni meliores fiant*, we must confess that this, as the context shows is a characteristic clause, not a purpose clause!

But, from what we have seen in Lessing's own correspondence, in Werenfels' and his popularity, from what we know in general of the eighteenth-century

bourgeois morality,<sup>24</sup> it is apparent that the critic was born into and reared in a system of morality from which he could hardly hope to escape. In his remarks on the *Captivi*, he advised the critic of a literary work to judge it according to the standards of its day, not of the critic's own age;<sup>25</sup> and here, precisely, we feel, Lessing himself went astray, in imposing the current eighteenth-century morality on a Roman example of Greek New Comedy.

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### THE 'MELIORES ANNOS' OF THE ELDER SENECA

In undertaking the task of evaluating the rhetoricians of his day for his sons, the Elder Seneca expresses pleasure upon returning to *antiqua studia* and looking back upon *meliores annos* (*Controversiae*, I. Praef. 1). The phrases are ordinarily interpreted in a personal sense, and it may be that the old man refers to what he regards as happier years in his own life; he later mentions the joy with which he initially took up the project, on the supposition that he would retrace the best part of his life (*Controversiae*, X. Praef. 1).

There is some ground, however, for the belief that Seneca employs the phrase *meliores annos* to apply to Roman society as well as to himself, that he views his own age as having deteriorated in literary, political, and social respects. The exact dates of his life are a matter for conjecture, but most scholars assign the closing years of his career to the age of Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> That that day was inferior to an earlier era has been established in the perspective of time. That Seneca had the acumen to be aware of the deterioration is not surprising in one whose *antiquus rigor* was evident to his son and who is described by the same authority as *maiorum consuetudini deditus* (*Seneca filius, Consolatio Ad Helviam*, xvii. 3-4). Certainly he was irritated by the *luxu temporum* and its deadly effect upon intellectual activity (*Controversiae*, I. Praef. 7).

<sup>24</sup>Of this morality, Franklin's Poor Richard is a good American example, applicable, too, to the Germany of the day. Cf. W. H. Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century: The Social Background of the Literary Revival*, pp. 227-228 (Cambridge, 1935).

<sup>25</sup>Lachmann, vol. 4, pp. 171-172.

<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., H. J. Müller's statement, 'temporibusque Caesarum Augusti et Tiberii floruit,' on p. vi of his edition of the Elder Seneca (Leipzig, 1887). Edward places the death of the rhetorician between 37 and 41 (The *Suasoriae* of the Elder Seneca, Cambridge University Press, 1928, pp. xxiv-xxv).

<sup>20</sup>'Die Sitten der Zuschauer zu bilden und zu bessern.'

<sup>21</sup>Lachmann, vol. 4, p. 191. The line from the *Captivi* is 1034.

<sup>22</sup>Hamburgische Dramaturgie, 34. Stück, Lachmann, vol. 9, p. 327.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Garland, op. cit., p. 69.

Although Seneca's criticism of contemporary manners bears a resemblance to similar vituperations in the writings of Juvenal, Persius, and Petronius, his particular complaint is the baleful influence exerted upon oratory. Citing as oracular Cato's definition of an orator as *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, he is provoked with the *somnus languorque ac somno et languore turpior malarum rerum industria* which have taken hold of men's minds, as well as their preoccupation with less virile pursuits (Controversiae, I. Praef. 8-9). After listing the social failing of his contemporaries, he caps his indictments with reference to the plagiarism which mental sloth has produced: 'most hallowed eloquence, which they cannot provide, they do not cease traducing' (Controversiae, I. Praef. 10).

That political conditions also contributed to the decline of eloquence is intimated in the complaints of Cassius Severus (Controversiae, III. Praef. 12). Seneca makes few references to the government or its officials, but the statements of Cassius are quoted with tacit approval, to the effect that eloquence was intended for practice under conditions of an earlier day: 'when I speak in the Forum, I engage in real activity; when I declaim . . . I seem to myself to exert activity in dreams.' Seneca speaks, furthermore, of the transfer of all competition to disgraceful pursuits, a state of affairs occasioned by the disappearance of the reward for a fine activity (Controversiae, I. Praef. 7).

Moreover, he approves of his son Mola's aversion to seeking public office, 'in which the very things which are hoped for are cause for fear' (Controversiae, II. Praef. 4). Further evidence of Seneca's belief that former years were happier ones politically are found in his lavish praise of the late Augustus, whose tolerance he especially lauds (Controversiae, II. 4.12; cf. IV. Praef. 5).

The changed conditions of oratorical practice, which Cassius Severus laments, are assigned by Seneca as a possible reason for the decline of letters in his day (Controversiae, I. Praef. 7). Certainly he makes frequent references to the futility of scholastic exercises. Despite the fact that his primary concern is with the presentation of them, he is not deluded concerning their pointlessness, particularly in relation to the literary standards of an earlier day.<sup>2</sup>

Roman literature, he openly declares, reached its peak in the day of Cicero; all intellectual activity had its birth at that time (Controversiae, I. Praef. 6). Cicero himself is Seneca's uncontested nominee for literary preeminence: 'that genius which alone the Roman people possessed equivalent to its imperial realm' (Controversiae, I. Praef. 11). His admiration for the orator is stated both explicitly and implicitly (Con-

troversiae, X. Praef. 6 and Suasoriae, VI and VII). He expresses a high opinion, too, of the ability of Ovid (Controversiae, II. 2,8). These two worthies share with Virgil the distinction of being quoted most frequently in the composition of Seneca, there being no doubt that he rates that trio as superior to any of his contemporaries.

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## THE WORDS FOR 'LOVE' IN JOHN XXI.15ff.

Most readers of Bible commentaries know that when Jesus said to Peter 'Lovest thou me?' and Peter answer 'Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee,' Jesus used one word for 'love' and Peter another, Jesus saying *ἀγαπᾷς* and Peter replying *φιλῶ*.

Many interpreters see in this a fine discrimination, thinking that the word used by Jesus had a meaning of deeper affection than the one used by Peter, and they would have Jesus say 'Dost thou love me intensely?' and Peter reply, 'I have admiration or affection for thee.'

One must waive in advance the question whether or not two natives of Galilee while talking on the shore of the neighboring Sea of Tiberias would choose Greek synonyms with delicate precision, but should consider only the Greek actually used in the present text of the Gospel of John.

The common word for 'love' in the New Testament is some form of *ἀγαπάω*. Professor Gildersleeve in a note to Justin Martyr, A.15.27, says '*ἀγαπᾷν* is a colder word than *φιλεῖν* and less intimate. The larger use of it in Christian writers is perhaps due to an avoidance of *φιλεῖν* in the sense of kissing.' If *ἀγαπᾷν* is a colder word than *φιλεῖν*, then the point that is made by the commentators vanishes.

I shall discuss the use in John only, to see if that author really felt any difference. Chap. V.20: 'The father loveth (*φιλεῖ*) the son.' There can be no lack of deep affection here. XI.3: The sisters of Lazarus sent for Jesus 'He whom thou lovest (*φιλεῖς*) is sick.' Then this is explained by the words 'Now Jesus loved (*ἠγάπα*) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.' Thus one word is used in place of the other, with no intention of changing the meaning, and apparently unobserved by the author.

XI.36: 'Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved (*ἐφίλει*) him.' There could hardly be any lack of affection and sympathy here.

XVI.27: 'The Father himself loves (*φιλεῖ*) you, because you have loved (*πεφιλήκατε*) me.' It would be hard to find words expressing deeper affection than these.

<sup>2</sup>See, in addition to the references quoted above, Controversiae, I. 7. 15; I. 8. 16; III. Praef. 13-15; IX. Praef. 1 ff; X. Praef. 12; also Müller, op. cit., p. vi.

The next two examples seem to me absolutely convincing.

XX.2: 'Then she runneth and cometh to that other disciple whom Jesus loved (ἐφίλει).'

XXI.7: 'Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved (ἡγάπα) saith unto Peter.' It is unthinkable that this defining phrase 'whom Jesus loved' should have two shades of meaning, or that John knew that he was using two different words for one idea.

Even in the passage under discussion, John XXI. 15ff., it is said 'He saith unto him the third time *lovest* (φιλεῖς) *thou me*,' but he had actually said (φιλεῖς) only once, the two other times he had said ἀγαπᾷς. 'Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time φιλεῖς'; but here again he had said φιλεῖς but once.

From all these passages in John it is perfectly evident that the author made no distinction between these two words for 'love', that he regarded them not only as synonyms but as the very same word. He thought he was writing φιλεῖς, when he wrote ἀγαπᾷς, and the reverse.

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## REVIEW

**The Excavations at Dura-Europos**, conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters. Final Report IV, ed. M. I. Rostovtzeff, A. R. Bellinger, F. E. Brown, N. P. Toll, and C. B. Welles. Part II, The Textiles. By B. PFISTER and LOUISA BELLINGER. viii, 64 pages; 8 figs. in text; 33 plates, of which 1-4 and frontispiece colored. 4to. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1945). \$2.50

This is the second part of the fourth of the seven Final Reports, which are in course of preparation and are to follow the Preliminary Reports, ed. P. V. C. Bauer, M. I. Rostovtzeff, and Alfred Bellinger, describing the nine seasons of excavations, and published 1928-1944.

The importance of the textiles from Dura lies in the fact that they form a definitely dated and located group of about 250 A.D. The text gives an excellent and concise discussion and description of the material, techniques, colors, and decorations, richly illustrated with text figures and plates, of which the colored ones are particularly valuable. The range of colors given on Pl. I in a series formed by photographing selected fragments, and the illustrations of the different kinds of weaving on Pl. XXXIII, are unusual and welcome features. The different decorative patterns in Fig. 2, the shaded rosettes on the frontispiece, the geometric and floral decorations shown on the plates and described with painstaking care by Miss Bellinger, being exactly dated pieces, will play an important role

in a history of ancient ornament, which is desirable.

The chapter on the garments (p. 10-13) is not quite up to the otherwise high standard of the book. The list of dresses, reproduced in part from a list of articles named in graffiti and drawn up by Welles in Preliminary Report of Fourth Season (1933), pp. 79ff., 139ff., repeats the inexact translation of Welles and therefore fails to identify the single garments. Delmatike, makrocheiron, and pallion—δελματική, μακρόχειρον and πάλλιον—are all three translated as 'robe,' meaning a solemn dress. But pallion is simply the Roman pallium, the equivalent of the Greek himation, a wide mantle, thus like the one illustrated in Figs. 3-4. The delmatic or dalmatica is the wide tunic woven in a square form, like the one worn in Fig. 3, where the sleeves are formed, as they are in the Greek chiton, by the outer part of the wide garment. In contrast, the makrocheiron is a tunic which has, as the name indicates, large sleeves worn in the way so well described by Miss Bellinger on p. 14 and illustrated in fig. 7 and Pl. V. The paidikon—παϊδικόν—is rightly translated as tunic, but ought to be named boy's tunic in contrast to the parthenike—παρθενική—the girl's tunic. It is illustrated in fig. 6. The chlanidion—χλανίδιον—on the other hand, is not a tunic, but a small chlanis—χλανίς—a shawl or small elegant mantle. The compiling of a vocabulary for ancient garments, with illustrations, is another desirable task which awaits an author.

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## ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES

This department is conducted by Professor Charles T. Murphy, of Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. Correspondence concerning abstracts may be addressed to him.

### ART. ARCHAEOLOGY

ROBINSON, C. A., JR. *The Zeus Ithomatas of Ageladas*. Robinson argues that the Artemision statue is probably the statue of Zeus Ithomatas set up at Naupaktos soon after the founding of that city in 455 B.C. and removed some time after 269 B.C. to Messene. In honor of the founding of Naupaktos, coins of Messene-Zankle showing Zeus Ithomatas were struck soon after 450 B.C. and in the next century the god appears on the coins of Messene. Differences between the figures on the coins and the statue are not irreconcilable, and all the bits of information tend to confirm the Artemision Zeus as the Ithomatas.

AJA 49 (1945) 121-7

(Walton)

TRITSCH, F. J. *False Doors on Tombs*. Small false doors on tombs were intended for the use of spirits, who could pass through them, as through closed doors, even when closed or blocked. The famous relieving triangles of the Mycenaean beehive tombs may also have served this function. Similar false doors for the use of spirits have persisted in European peasant tradition until fairly recent times.

JHS 63 (1943) 113-5

(Ridington)

## A CORRECTION

On page 54, column 2, line 7 read 'humanist', instead of 'humorist'.